



MINDTACTICS™

ONE SHIFT AT A TIME TO RECLAIM YOUR FOCUS

↑ CLARITY IN THINKING & ACTION ↓



GAIN FOCUS, DIRECTION, AND THE
CONFIDENCE TO MAKE PURPOSEFUL
DECISIONS THAT DRIVE RESULTS.

MindTactics™ Focus Scale Self-Assessment

A fast, practical check to see where your focus stands today and which MindTactics tools to use first.

How to answer: For each item, circle how often this was true for you over the past Month. Scale: **0 = Never** · **1 = Rarely** · **2 = Sometimes** · **3 = Often** · **4 = Very Often**

Part A — Daily Focus & Attention

1. I reach the end of the day without making meaningful progress on my most important work.
2. I get pulled into email or chat within the first 30 minutes of starting work.
3. I try to do two or more things at once and later realise I didn't do either well.
4. I feel mentally drained by midday.
5. I switch tasks because of notifications or pings.
6. I avoid starting a hard but important task even when I have time.

Part B — Systems & Boundaries

7. My calendar doesn't have protected focus blocks (60–90 min) most days.
8. I don't have a consistent triage window for email/chat (they leak into my day).
9. I finish the day without a simple plan for tomorrow.
10. I struggle to say “no” or “not now” to ad-hoc requests.
11. My work setup (apps/space) makes it easy to get distracted.
12. I don't have a habit or a routine that helps me start deep work.

Your Personal Focus Profile

- **A (Daily Focus) subtotal:** ____ / 24
- **B (Systems & Boundaries) subtotal:** ____ / 24
- **Total:** ____ / 48

0–12	Focused & steady	Consistent progress on priority work; distractions are present but rarely derail the day.
13–24	Inconsistent	Mix of focused and reactive days; interruptions and task-switching affect momentum.
25–36	Overloaded	Frequent distractions, high decision load, and noticeable attention residue; progress feels sporadic.
37–48	Burnt & reactive	Persistent overwhelm and fatigue; priorities are unclear and the day is largely driven by incoming demands.

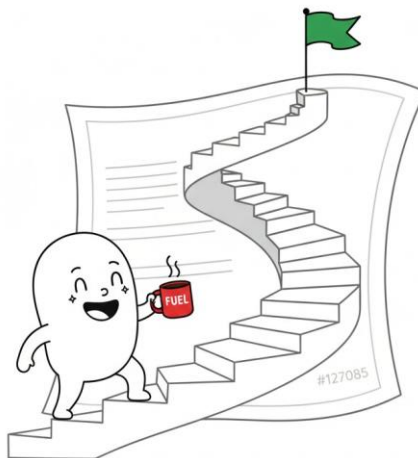
The Ultimate Focus Framework



HABIT SHIFT
Mental Stage + Habit Loop



FEARS REFRAME
Fear Buster + Truth Compass + Money Mindset



MOTIVATION BUILDER
Life Mission + Design Your Life + Life Priorities

The **Ultimate Focus Framework** is a practical, evidence-informed system that turns clarity into consistent results by aligning three pillars: **Habit Shift**, **Fears Reframe**, and **Motivation Building**.

For this tool, we're zooming in on **Habit Shift**, simple daily planning and environment design to make focus automatic.

1. Habit Shift	2. Fears Reframe	3. Motivation Builder
Manage your mental energy.	Turn avoidance into agency with the Fear Buster.	Define your Life Mission using Logotherapy inspired practice.
Build automatic routines (the Habit Loop).	Use a Truth Compass to sort which thoughts to keep or discard.	Design Your Life experiment.
	Reshape money beliefs with the Money Mindset tool.	Life Priorities assessment.

1. Habit Shift

Why Planning Beats Willpower (and why your Mental Stage gets crowded)
 Your brain is powerful but it runs on **limited energy** each day. As David Rock explains in *Your Brain at Work*, the part responsible for high quality thinking (your **prefrontal cortex**) is like a **small mental stage** with a single **spotlight**. Only a few “actors” (tasks, decisions, conversations) can stand in that light at once. When too many rush on, the scene collapses. That’s not a personal failing; it’s how the stage is built.

And switching hurts more than you think: studies of real workplaces show it can take **around 20–25 minutes** on average to fully resume your original task after an interruption. In a 2-hour focus block, just a couple of switches can cost nearly **half the block**. Protect your spotlight.



FOCUS DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Finite Mental Energy: Budget it wisely.
 Attention is Fragile: Avoid 'residue' from switching.
 Emotions Steer: Manage stress, seek clarity.

Habits: Your Brain's Auto-Pilot

Charles Duhigg explains in *The Power of Habit* that many actions run on an automatic **Habit Loop** stored largely in the **basal ganglia**, so sticky they can persist even when memory struggles.

Duhigg tells the story of Eugene Pauly, a man who lost the ability to form new memories after a viral illness. He couldn't remember his neighbour's names or recognise his own living room layout, yet he could walk around the block and find his way home and raid the pantry for a snack. Why? Because **habits live largely in the basal ganglia**, a brain region that can store routines as cue→routine→reward loops, **separate from conscious memory**. In short, **once a habit is wired, your brain can run it on auto-pilot**, even when other systems struggle.

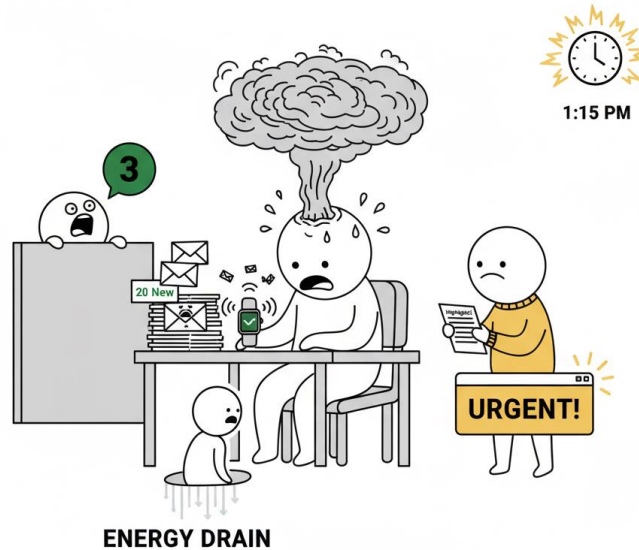
THE HABIT LOOP



Let's illustrate these concepts with a story...

MONDAY MORNING MAYHEM

The Unplanned Mental Stage



You step into the office at 8:30 on a busy Monday. Before you reach your desk, a **colleague calls out**: “Did you check the 10:30 agenda? Can we align on point three?” In the kitchen, **your boss asks for “quick highlights”** from last week’s report before his next meeting. Your smartwatch buzzes, **five new chats** from your team.

At your desk, you log in: **twenty new emails**. You start replying to what seems urgent emails and chat messages. Next thing you know, **it’s 10:30 and the meeting has already started**. You rush in and try to read the agenda while people are talking. At the end, someone **asks you to stay behind for ten minutes** to discuss your response to one of those “urgent” emails.

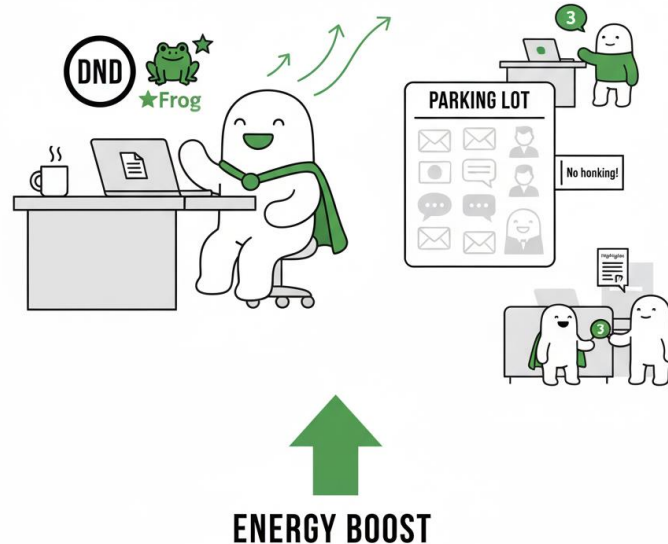
Suddenly **it’s midday**. Your brain feels fried and you haven’t even started the **document due at 2:00 p.m.** You grab a 15-minute coffee, sit down, and finally start working on the document. Thirty minutes in, just as you’re finding a rhythm, **an email notification pops** in the corner of your screen, another reply on that urgent thread. You cave, open it, and fire back a quick response.

You try to refocus on the report, squeeze your brain for momentum, glance at the clock: 1:15 p.m. How did time fly? **Panic sets in, you’ve got 45 minutes left!**

Your **mental stage** was flooded, multiple actors shouting at once before your first sip of coffee. The spotlight scattered, and your brain’s limited energy drained fast.

MONDAY MORNING MASTERED

The Planned & Directed Mental Stage



8:30 — Arrive.

You glance at your plan and flip on **Do Not Disturb**. The report is due at **2:00 p.m.**; it's your **★Frog**.

8:40 — Cue.

You make a coffee. That's your **habit cue**.

8:45–10:15 — Action (Focus Block #1).

Coffee in hand, you start the report: outline → section 1 → section 2.

Parking Lot catches everything else (boss highlights, team chats, new emails). Smartwatch and inbox stay muted; agenda is already open in a background tab.

10:15 — Reward.

You close the doc, take a **snack + quick stretch walk**. That's the **habit reward**.

10:20–10:30 — Align with colleague (10 mins).

You do a fast huddle on point three of the **10:30** meeting: one decision, one concern, one ask. Done.

10:30–11:30 — Meeting.

You're prepared, so you read **with** the conversation, not against it.

Any actions go straight to the Parking Lot, email and chat still wait.

11:30–12:00 — Triage & manager update.

- Scan the **20 emails + 5 chats**; respond to what's truly urgent, schedule or delegate the rest.
- Send your manager **3 bullet highlights** from last week's report (already half-drafted in your Parking Lot).

12:00 — Cue.

Top up your coffee. Second **habit cue**.

12:05–13:35 — Action (Focus Block #2).

Back to the report: finish sections 3–4, polish the exec summary and send it off.

Timer set; DND still on. You're in flow.

13:35 — Reward

Take your lunch break

Why this works

- **Mental stage protected:** One actor (the report) owns the spotlight during **08:45–10:15** and **12:05–13:35**.
- **Pre-decisions beat willpower:** Email/chat have a **home (11:30–12:00)**, so they can't hijack deep work.
- **Habit Loop embedded:**
 - **Cue:** coffee at **08:40** and **12:00**
 - **Routine:** open doc → write (focus block)
 - **Reward:** snack, short walk, lunchRepeating this wires "**coffee ⇒ write**" into muscle memory, so starting gets easier every week.

Put it into practice (today)

1. **Design Tomorrow Today (daily, 10 min):** Set Top 3 + ★Frog; book two focus blocks.
2. **Focus Blocks (2× 60–90 min):** DND on; timer; Parking Lot for new inputs.
3. **Set your Habit Loop:** Cue (coffee) → Routine (write/work) → Reward (snack/walk).
4. **Use a Parking Lot** to capture—but not chase—new inputs.
5. **Give reactivity a home:** set **triage windows (15–30 min)** for emails, chats etc.
6. **Boundary Scripts:** Polite "not now" lines to protect your stage.

Friction/Fuel Sweep (weekly, 10 min)

A super-fast tune-up for your work environment and routines.

Friction = anything that makes the right work harder to start/finish (distractions, extra clicks, unclear files, noisy space).

Fuel = anything that makes the right work easier (pre-opened docs, templates, checklists, cues, shortcuts).

1. **Scan last week:** What derailed you most? (one friction) What helped? (one fuel)
2. **Pick 1 + 1:** Choose **one friction to remove** and **one fuel to add**, keep it tiny.
3. **Change the environment:** Make it physical/digital, not just an intention.
4. **Set a reminder:** Repeat every Friday or Sunday.
5. **Note the effect:** Did deep work start faster next week?

Examples

Remove 1 friction

- Mute Slack/Teams channels not tied to this week's goals.
- Turn off desktop email pop-ups.
- Archive/move clutter from your desktop or Downloads folder.
- Put phone in another room during focus blocks.
- Replace a vague task "work on report" with a concrete first step "draft 1 paragraph for executive summary and design report sections".

Add 1 fuel

- Pre-open the exact file you'll start with tomorrow; place it front and center.
- Create a 1-page template/checklist for recurring tasks.
- Pin the 3 folders you use daily to Quick Access/Favorites.
- Put your noise-cancelling headphones + focus playlist on the desk.
- Set a **cue**: coffee at 8:40 ⇒ start Focus Block.

Tips for repeat use

- Re-take the self assessment weekly at the same time.
- Track Deep-Work Blocks completed, Task Completion %, and Focus Score (1–10).
- Celebrate small wins; adjust one lever at a time.
- Tiny changes, big payoff. One friction out, one fuel in—every week.

Don't "try harder." **Plan smarter.** Decide today what matters tomorrow, protect deep-work blocks, remove friction, and let habits carry the start-up cost.

Bottom line: Your day improves not by squeezing more willpower out of a tired brain, but by designing your environment and calendar so your best thinking happens—on purpose, at the right time.

“Where focus goes, energy flows” Tony Robbins

*If you're interested in the remaining tools in the **Ultimate Focus Framework** or any other **MindTactics™** resources for mindset shifts, please get in touch zahra@mindtactics.co.uk*